Reading Response #1

Honestly, I haven’t had a ton of experience with sci-fi or fantasy literature before this class. I’ve watched some popular stuff like Stranger Things, Black Mirror, and of course the Hunger Games movies, but when it comes to reading sci-fi, I’ve only read a few things in high school, and they weren’t very focused on gender or environmental themes. I never really thought about science fiction in terms of real-world issues like climate change or feminism before now.

As for environmental humanities or ecofeminism, I had literally never heard of ecofeminism before this week’s reading, and I didn’t really know what environmental humanities meant either. But after going through the readings, I’m starting to get that it’s more about looking at how humans, nature, gender, and even race or class all intersect in the environment and how it's represented. The Ecofeminist Science Fiction reading really stood out to me; it made me realize that women writers have been shaping sci-fi for a long time. I had no idea that Frankenstein by Mary Shelley was considered the first science fiction novel. That quote from Gerry Canavan really stuck with me: “widely acknowledged as the first SF novel, dramatizes man’s overstepping of his natural bounds in a manner that would become paradigmatic for the genre” (Murphy,1). I feel like that totally connects to what we’re talking about in terms of ecology, power, and even patriarchy.

From the readings, I learned that sci-fi isn’t just about space and aliens; it can also be about questioning who we are, how we treat others, including non-human life, and how gender and power show up in unexpected ways.

I’m still curious about how queerness plays into environmental thinking, like I get that it disrupts binaries, but I want to understand how that looks in a story or character.

I guess my biggest question is, how do we tell the difference between what’s just cool sci-fi and what’s challenging the systems we live in? I also wonder how we’re supposed to keep up with all these theories. I’m still new to reading stuff like this, and sometimes I must reread things two or three times just to get it.

To me, the word ecology used to just mean like, ecosystems and nature. But now I’m seeing that it can also mean a system of relationships between people, bodies, machines, identities, and even power structures. When we talk about ecology in relation to gender and sexuality, it’s not just about plants and animals; it’s about how everything is connected in deeper ways, including social roles and norms. That’s kind of wild to me but also makes total sense after reading these intros.

Favorite quote:

“Ecofeminists hold cooperation, too, as a core value” (Murphy,6).

I just really liked that line. It’s simple but powerful, and kind of the opposite of how so much sci-fi seems to focus on domination or control.